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ABSTRACT

Chapter 2 of a revised volume on school leadership, this chapter reviews theories of leadership style--the way a leader leads. Although most experts agree that leadership style is important, they disagree concerning style components, leaders' capabilities for changing styles, the effects of personality traits on style, and the desirability of flexible styles. Style theories may be broadly categorized according to decision-making behaviors, views of subordinates, focus on work or people, and approaches to facilitating organizational change. Actually, effective leaderhip defies categorization; there is no ideal approach to fit all situations. Whether relation- or task-oriented, leaders need to adapt their styles to the management situation, to followers' maturity levels, and to other contingencies (role expectations, personality characteristics, time constraints, political considerations, and interpersonal tensions). Although leadership style theories differ significantly, all have implications for better leadership. Each can be used as a basis for training and selecting leaders and for enhancing one's own leadership style. (MLH)

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Chapter 2

Leadership Styles

Jo Ann Mazzarella and Stuart C. Smith

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Chapter 2
Leadership Styles

Jo Ann Mazzarella and Stuart C. Smith

In an era when school leaders must focus their energies on providing an excellent education for all students, the high achievers as well as those who are at risk, and do so with limited financial resources, a concern for leadership style may seem at best academic and at worst a waste of time. What is a leadership style and why does it matter?

Reduced to its simplest terms, a leadership style is the way a leader leads. In a chapter on the principal's leadership behavior, Thomas Sergiovanni and David Elliott speak of the "ways in which the principal expresses leadership, uses power and authority, arrives at decisions, and in general interacts with teachers and others." These activities—some of the most important things school administrators do—have enormous implications for their effectiveness. If leaders choose inappropriate ways of leading, they will often fail to accomplish the task at hand, reach long-range organizational goals, or maintain positive relationships with subordinates. These kinds of failure can lead to ultimate loss of position or loss of peace of mind.

Although most authors on leadership style agree that it is an important component of leadership and something leaders ought to become aware of, there is very little more that they agree about. Experts disagree about the major elements of leadership style, about whether the leader can change his or her style, and whether personality traits have any effect on style.

All this disagreement is very confusing and not very helpful to those who must work in leadership positions everyday. Leaders want to know what leadership styles are effective, and where, how they can become better leaders, what kind of leadership training is useful, and how to select coworkers and subordinates who have the ability to become good leaders.

Although at this state there are no definitive right answers to these style dilemmas, this chapter is written with these practical, everyday needs of leaders in mind. An attempt is made to present the elements of leadership style theory that have useful and helpful implications for administrators. Near the end of the chapter is a section that states some practical implications of each of the major leadership style theories; the theme is how to select, to train, and to be a better leader.

History of Style Theory

Views of leadership have changed radically over the last fifty years.

The earliest leadership research tried to determine what makes a leader and what makes a good leader by examining the inherent traits of leaders. After the collection of leadership traits became too large to manage or make sense of, researchers began to focus on leadership behavior, on what leaders do in their capacities as leaders. The assumption was that leadership was something almost anyone could accomplish if he or she took the trouble to learn how it was done effectively.

The concept of leadership style was born, and the research began to focus on which leadership style was best, often comparing autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles. Although democratic styles frequently appeared to be the most effective, the theory began to emerge that no style of leadership was best in all situations. Situational theories of leadership style then appeared on the scene, introducing the idea that the most effective style would fit the situation at hand.

In later years the view that leadership is merely a behavior (like swimming or running) that anyone can learn has been modified. New studies of effective leaders suggest that effective leadership results from an interaction of behaviors and inherent traits. In other words, leadership ability is partly learned and partly inborn.

Categories of Styles

It seems logical that leadership style does not include everything a leader does or thinks; the way the leader sharpens pencils is not a facet of leadership style nor are particular religious beliefs. Which activities and beliefs should be focused on when assessing one's own or someone else's style?

One superintendent may let staff make most of the decisions about how the district is run; another superintendent may feel that she alone has the expertise and ability to make important decisions. One principal may try to motivate teachers with rewards and punishments; another may view teachers as self-starting. One supervisor may emphasize clear job descriptions; another may establish warm relationships with employees. One principal may push teachers to implement new programs; another may respond to teachers' initiatives. These contrasting types of leaders suggest some of the major dimensions for comparing leadership styles.

Who Makes Decisions?

Decision-making is an important component of leadership style. Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones are both principals who are faced with massive budget cuts. Mr. Smith spends the weekend alone in his office wrestling with the budget. At Monday afternoon's faculty meeting he announces what and whom must be cut. Mr. Jones, however, uses the Monday meeting to explain the problem, ask for suggestions as to what might be cut, and then call for a voice vote on each suggestion.

These two leaders would be called the "autocrat" and the "consultative manager" by Thomas Bonoma and Dennis Slevin, who have identified four leadership styles based on where the authority for decisions is placed and where information about the decision comes from.

Another example of leadership style might be Mrs. Green (the consultative "autocrat") who asks for faculty suggestions and then makes the decision alone or Mr. Blue (the "shareholder") who elicits no information exchange from his faculty but leaves it up to them to make the decision. From these examples, it remains clear that how people habitually make decisions is one component of leadership style.

Another way of looking at and classifying the dimensions of leadership style has been proposed by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt, who see leadership style as a continuum stretching from "subordinate-centered" to "boss-centered." The most subordinate-centered leadership involves giving subordinates great freedom to make decisions within very flexible limits. With the most boss-centered leadership, the manager alone makes the decision and either merely announces it or attempts to "sell" the decision. While Tannenbaum and Schmidt admit that there are times when more boss-centered leadership is necessary, clearly they see subordinate-centered behavior as the most effective. They advocate making a continuing effort to confront subordinates with the "challenge of freedom."

Are Employees Viewed as Lazy or Motivated?

As well as differing about who makes decisions, leaders may also vary in the way they view employees. One principal may see staff members as lacking in motivation, needing to be constantly pushed, and holding their own interest above that of the school. Another principal may assume that staff are just the opposite: motivated to improve the school, self-starting, and giving prime importance to school needs.

This way of classifying leaders' views of employees is found in the writing of Douglas McGregor, who formulated the now famous concept of Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor believed each person holds one of two opposing theories of human behavior. One, Theory X, holds that people are basically lazy, need to be prodded to action, and are motivated only by material or other rewards and punishments. The other, Theory Y, holds that people enjoy accomplishment, are self-motivated (except when thwarted), and have a desire to make a real contribution to their organization.

McGregor classified leaders as following either Theory X or Theory Y, with Theory Y leaders cast as modern, enlightened, humanitarian, and compassionate leaders who succeed in motivating people.

According to McGregor, each view of human nature is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one treats workers as being responsible and self-motivated, they will be. If one treats them as lazy or without motivation, they will be that too. A realization that this is so has been the basis of a movement toward more

democratic determination of organizational objectives and participative management as part of an attempt to increase employee commitment to organizational goals.

McGregor's theories have made an important contribution toward making leadership more humanistic. Yet some critics have maintained that too much participative management can impede accomplishment of organizational goals. One of these, Philip DeTurk (headmaster of Shepherd Knapp School in Massachusetts) expressed his fears that leaders who insist on always sharing power may be abdicating their responsibility to meet the institution's needs for authority, may be endangering their own health through personal overcommitment to time-consuming decision-making practices, and may be ignoring the urgency of month-to-month financial survival.

DeTurk feels that McGregor himself came to a similar conclusion in a speech he gave when resigning as president of Antioch College.

> I thought that maybe I could operate so that everyone would like me, that "good human relations" would eliminate all discord and agreement. I couldn't have been more wrong. It took a couple of years, but I have finally begun to realize that a leader cannot avoid the exercise of authority any more than he can avoid the responsibility for what happens to his organization.

In spite of the undeniable value of McGregor's theories, it may be that too slavishly dedicating oneself to Theory Y-oriented leadership in the organization may cause decision-making to be slighted and the survival of the individual leader or the organization to be threatened. The balance is a difficult one.

Is the Focus on People or Work?

Some people have more interest in what they are doing than in the people with whom they are working. Others give more importance to their relationship with coworkers than to the job. Whether one emphasizes the task or human relations is often thought to be central to leadership style.

For leaders, an important aspect of the task at hand often includes establishing ways of doing things, channels of communication, or organizational patterns. Andrew Halpin (along with Ralph Stogdill and others at The Ohio State University) called such activities "initiating structure." He found that effective leaders place a lot of importance on initiating structure. But he found, too, that they are also very much concerned about their relationships with people. Effective leaders evidenced a lot of behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth. Halpin called this kind of behavior "consideration."

In a study of fifty Ohio superintendents, Halpin found that both school board members and staff saw superintendents' leadership effectiveness as made up of behavior characterized by high scores on initiating structure and con-

sideration. Ineffective superintendents had low scores in each.

It is hard to balance work concerns and people concerns. In fact some experts claim it is impossible. Fred Fiedler, who called these dimensions "task-orientation" and "relationship-orientation," believed that leaders were able to focus on either one or the other but not both. He saw task-orientation and relationship-orientation as two ends of a continuum (like thin and fat or tall and short) and believed it logically impossible to be at both ends of the continuum.

In the research on his "contingency theory" (described in detail later in this chapter), Fiedler ascertained that leaders who described their "least preferred coworker" in positive terms were "human relations oriented," whereas those who described the least liked coworker in negative terms were "task oriented." (The nature of the instrument used to measure the attitude toward this coworker did not allow for leaders who had both orientations.) Fiedler believed that both styles could be effective.

Are task orientation and human relations orientation mutually exclusive? Some authors, such as Sergiovanni, side with Fiedler in answering yes. William Reddin is an example of other writers who, siding with Halpin, answer no. Reddin saw four possible combinations of orientation: human relations orientation alone, task orientation alone, both of these orientations together, and neither one. Reddin believed that any one of these four styles could be effective depending on the situation. When to use which style is discussed in the next major section.

Do Leaders Initiate or Respond?

Still another dimension for comparing leaders' styles is how they go about implementing changes in their organizations. Light was shed on this aspect of style by a series of studies at the (now defunct) Research and Development Center for Teacher Education in Austin, Texas. Shirley Hord and Gene Hall explain that when researchers compared the relative success of nine elementary schools in implementing new curriculum programs, the only variable that accounted for differences among the schools was the leadership style of the principals.

Schools having the greatest success were led by "initiators"—principals who formulated a vision for the school and pushed teachers to implement policies and practices that would help students achieve, say Hord and Hall. At the other end of the spectrum, principals of schools that had the least success in implementing the new programs were "responders." They "are easily distinguished from the other styles by their preoccupation with the feelings of others and their inclination to let others supply the energy and take the lead."

A third style of principals, "managers," presided over schools that had moderate success. Because a manager's primary motivations are to protect teachers from being burdened by too many tasks and to make sure that things are "done right," they tend to take on more responsibility for interventions

themselves.

The three styles are not mutually exclusive; in fact, all principals embody varying elements of each style. Hord and Hall say "the three styles can be viewed as positions on a continuum of style." Although few individuals would "fit exactly into one particular style...it appears that every change facilitator does have a predominant style that tends to persist through time and varying circumstances."

In another article by members of the research team, Gene Hall and his colleagues hesitate about making judgments as to which style is most effective. Although initiators were more effective than other principals in implementing new programs, teachers preferred the climate in schools led by managers. Moreover, none of the schools failed to implement the programs, which were actually used by all the teachers. "The role of the principal in the school improvement process must be viewed in terms of the many factors that affect it rather than naively assuming that a quick cure can be made simply by changing one variable, such as the change facilitator style of the principal," say Hall and his coauthors. "School life is much richer and more complex than that."

Another researcher who has examined the connection between principals' style and success in implementing innovations is Cecil Miskel. He found that those principals who tended to be risk takers (or had low security needs) were more successful at innovative efforts—at least when they also had fewer years of experience and worked in a school that used innovative management techniques.

Is success at innovation the same as success as a leader? Hall and his colleagues warn against too quickly equating the two. But their findings about initiators and Miskel's findings about risk-takers take on added significance when one recalls that James Lipham defined leadership as "that behavior which initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system." This definition is not just an idle theory; good leaders are always making things better. Implicit in the word leader is the idea of movement from one place to another. Leaders are not leaders when they are standing still.

William Holloway and Ghulam Niazi related risk-taking propensities of school administrators to Fiedler's concept of leader control over the situation. Holloway and Niazi found that the more control school principals had over their work situation, the greater their disposition to take risks. They concluded that leaders' willingness to take risks can be increased by improving the leader's status or group support.

The Limits of Categories

In this section, we have discussed a number of ways of looking at leadership style. Some stress decision-making styles, some stress views of human behavior, others stress whether leaders are more interested in the people or the job, and still others stress how leaders facilitate change. Although some of these theories are overlapping, they are not identical, and some directly

conflict with each other.

Moreover, these views of leadership style are broad categories that are helpful only in introducing the topic. As we shall see, some other theories, such as those that focus on the maturity level of followers, do not fit conveniently in one of these categories. Effective leaders also vary their styles in response to such factors as community expectations, organizational climate and culture, and certain aspects of the task, such as timelines and available resources.

All these different views of leadership necessitate a choice. Administrators must choose and make use of the theories that best fit their experiences, situations, personalities, and, not least, intuitive perceptions of themselves and others.

The Ideal Style

Many leaders or would-be leaders puzzle over which leadership style is the most effective. Wanting to know the ideal way to approach leadership, they debate such issues as whether they should strive for subordinate-centered leadership or boss-centered leadership, whether they should base their leadership on Theory X or Theory Y, whether they should concentrate on the task or human relations, or whether they should initiate changes or respond to subordinates.

Some researchers on leadership style maintain that these dilemmas are not only unsolvable, but also the wrong questions to ask. These researchers believe that there is no ideal approach to leadership that fits all situations; rather, the best view of leadership style is that it must vary to fit the particular situation at hand.

While some leaders swear by the importance of relationship-oriented leadership and others proclaim the importance of a task-oriented style, Fiedler, using his contingency theory, maintains that either one of these styles can be appropriate, depending on the amount of control the leader has over the situation (sometimes called how "favorable" a situation is). Fiedler sees three important components in situational control: status or position power of the leader, quality of relations between the leader and members, and structure of the task. Fiedler's extensive research reveals that when a leader is extremely influential or extremely uninfluential, the most effective style will be a task-oriented style. Relationship-oriented leaders are more effective in the situations that fall in between.

What Is the Situation?

Many authorities agree with Fiedler's view that the leadership style needed depends on the situation. Many disagree, however, about what the important elements of the situation are. Whereas Fiedler saw three important elements in the situation (status, leader-member relations, and task structure), William Reddin sees five important elements: organizational philosophy, tech-

nology (or how the work is done), the superior, the coworkers, and the subordinates.

Reddin identified four possible styles that were combinations of task-oriented behavior and relationship-oriented behavior. "Integrated style" is style that emphasizes both relationship-oriented and task-oriented behavior. "Separated" style is deficient in both. "Related" style emphasizes relationship-oriented behavior but neglects task-oriented. "Dedicated" style emphasizes task but neglects relationship.

Reddin believed that each one of these four styles (even separated style) could be effective or ineffective depending on the situation, and he coined descriptive terms to describe the possible managerial types embodying the eight effective and ineffective styles. For example, the "autocrat" uses the dedicated (high task, low relationship) style inappropriately and is ineffective as a leader; the "benevolent autocrat" uses the dedicated style appropriately and is an effective leader. Figure 1 shows the effective and ineffective manifestations of each style.

Reddin explained that an appropriate time to use the dedicated style (or to be a benevolent autocrat) is when the manager knows more about the job than the subordinates do, when unscheduled events are likely to occur, when directions must be given, or where the subordinates' performance is easily measurable.

Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt describe "forces" a leader should consider in deciding how to manage. Although some theorists would lump all these forces into the category "situational," Tannenbaum and Schmidt call them "forces in the manager," "forces in the subordinates," and "forces in the situation."

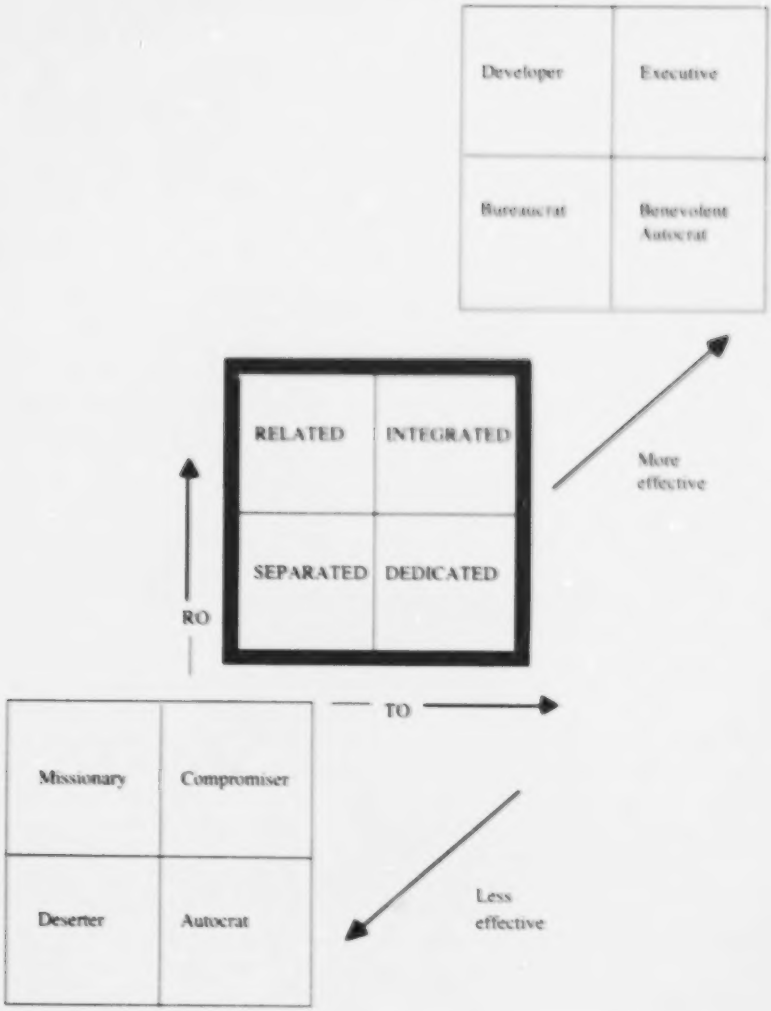
Forces within managers include their value systems (How do they feel about the worth of participative decision-making?), their confidence in subordinates, their inclinations toward a particular style, and their feelings of security (Can they feel comfortable releasing control?).

Forces in the subordinates include such things as needs for independence, readiness to assume responsibility, and tolerance for ambiguity. The forces that Tannenbaum and Schmidt call "forces in the situation" include type of organization (Will participative decision-making be accepted and appropriate?), group effectiveness (Can employees work together?), the problem itself (Is it simple or complex, minor or important?), and time pressure.

Maturity Level of Followers

In contrast to Reddin and to Tannenbaum and Schmidt, who examined several components of the situation, Philip Gates, Kenneth Blanchard, and Paul Hersey looked at only one aspect of these components (subordinates) as being the most important and called this aspect "follower maturity." In the view of these authors, the leadership style a leader chooses ought to depend on the maturity of the followers. By maturity, they mean three things:

Figure 1. Effective and Ineffective Manifestations of the Four Possible Leadership Styles According to Reddin



From *Managerial Effectiveness* by William Reddin. © 1970. Reprinted by permission of McGraw-Hill Book Company.

- a capacity to set high but attainable goals
- a willingness and ability to take responsibility
- education or experience

Because follower maturity can change over time, these authors believed that appropriate leader behavior should also change over time. When followers are low in maturity, they need leaders who are heavily task-oriented. As follower maturity increases, leaders can shift their emphasis from tasks to relationships. Then as followers come to have above average maturity, even their need for relationship behavior decreases.

A similar model of leadership style is proposed by Kenneth Blanchard, Drea Zigarmi, and Patricia Zigarmi, who say that "school principals should be guided primarily by a single key factor" in choosing their leadership style. This factor is the followers' "developmental level," which, they say, "is determined by the degree of competence and commitment that a follower employs to perform a particular task without supervision."

One teacher, for instance, may be highly enthusiastic about performing a certain task but lack necessary skills; in this case, the leader must clearly tell the teacher what to do and how, while clearly supervising the person's performance. Blanchard and his colleagues call this the *directing* style. In contrast, the *delegating* style (assigning decision-making responsibilities to the follower) is appropriate when the follower is both motivated and competent to do the task.

In a situation where the follower has some competence in the task but is not very motivated, the leader needs to combine direction with praise and encouragement to raise the individual's confidence. In this *coaching* style, say Blanchard and his coauthors, control over decisions stays with the leader. The final style, *supporting*, is for the follower who is competent but varies in commitment. "Theirs is more a motivational problem than a confidence problem," say the authors, so the leader actively listens and supports the follower as he or she makes decisions and carries out tasks.

Multiple Elements

Thomas Sergiovanni maintains that "maturity of followers (or any other single factor of which I am aware) is too simple a construct around which to build a contingency theory of leadership." In an article criticizing leader training programs that focus only on one situational variable, Sergiovanni cites a number of other contingencies on which leadership style has been found to rest. These include Reddin's job characteristics, Fiedler's leader influence, and such concepts from other authors as role expectations of followers, peers, and superordinates; personality characteristics of leaders and followers; time constraints in achieving objectives; political considerations; and interpersonal tension within the group.

In an earlier work, Sergiovanni and David Elliott cited the aspects of the situation they felt were most important for leaders to consider: the kinds of demands the job makes on leadership, the nature and distribution of power and

authority, and the expectations held by significant others. Sergiovanni and Elliott noted that educational settings (particularly leadership situations in elementary schools) only occasionally call for separated and dedicated styles. According to these authors, therefore, styles that emphasize human relations will be the most effective in schools. They explain that with separated and dedicated styles "the human dimension is neglected." "The focus of leadership in general" ought to be related or integrated in schools that "wish to make a human difference."

Situation and Personality

If leadership effectiveness depends on the situation, does it follow that who the leader is has no importance? Stephen Hencley, in a survey of leadership theories, noted that to many authors "the situational approach maintains that leadership is determined not so much by the characters of the individuals as by the requirements of social situations." Hencley feels that the situational approach focuses on "relationships and variables in social and environmental situations that appear to generate leadership behavior." Individual capacity for leadership is not important.

But this view is certainly not held by all authors on leadership.

Fiedler saw propensity for task-oriented or relationship-oriented behavior as a function of personality and noted that the leader's personality was one factor in determining success. He described his theory of leadership effectiveness as one that "takes account of the leader's personality as well as the situational factors in the leadership situation."

Andrew Halpin, too, whose theories were examined earlier, saw leadership as being determined in part by the situation and in part by leader characteristics. E. Mark Hanson, in a review of leadership style theories, defined situational theory in general as the view that situational factors and personality variables interact in determining leader effectiveness.

Leader personality does make a difference in leadership style; in fact, many authors believe that leadership style is determined by personality and is difficult to change. This idea does not, however, negate the important contribution of situational theory and research that no leadership style is ideal for every leadership situation.

Can You Change Your Style?

If the situationists are right, if leadership style ought to vary to fit the situation, then it follows that leaders need to be able to change their styles at will. Is this possible? Is leadership style flexible enough to be changed to fit the situation? Or should leaders attempt to change the situation instead?

Identifying Your Style

The first step for a leader wanting to change his or her style is to become aware of what that style is. Yet identifying one's style is not simple. Fiedler, in a 1979 article, cites two studies that found that most leaders are not able to see their styles as others see them. In fact, one study found a zero correlation between leader and subordinate style ratings. Since it is assumed that others' perceptions are more objective than one's own, it seems likely that most leaders do not see themselves accurately.

All is not lost, however. Fiedler believes that leaders can be taught to recognize their styles. Together with Martin Chemers and Linda Mahar, Fiedler developed a teaching guide that helps leaders identify whether they are relationship-motivated or task-motivated. This guide asks leaders to look at their own behaviors and helps them rate themselves on a number of specific style factors, rather than asking them to make guesses about overall styles.

Much of Fiedler's own research used the Least-preferred Coworker scale as an instrument to measure style. Leaders are asked to describe the colleague whom they have most disliked. Those who describe this coworker in very negative terms have been found to be task-motivated, whereas those who describe him or her in positive or less critical terms have been found to be relationship-motivated.

Sergiovanni and Elliott also have formulated a questionnaire to help leaders identify their own styles. Those who take this questionnaire are asked to describe how they would act if they were leaders of a work group. Respondents mark "always," "frequently," "occasionally," "seldom," or "never" to such statements as "I would allow members complete freedom in their work," "I would needle members for greater effort," and "I would schedule the work to be done."

Sergiovanni and Elliott suggest that leaders might find it helpful to have their coworkers or subordinates describe the leaders on the same questionnaire. They warn, "Don't be surprised if others see you differently than you see yourself."

Thomas Bonoma and Dennis Slevin display their leadership model on a grid to help leaders diagnose their styles. This grid, reproduced in figure 2, rests on their belief that leadership style is a mixture of where information for decisions comes from and where decision authority is placed. Bonoma and Slevin quoted a reader who reported that this method "confirmed that my actual leadership style was inconsistent with my preconceived image of leadership style."

Style Flex

Even if style can be identified, it does not necessarily follow that it can be changed at will. We hear out, first, those researchers who deny style flexibility, then those who admit to some degree of flexibility, and, finally,

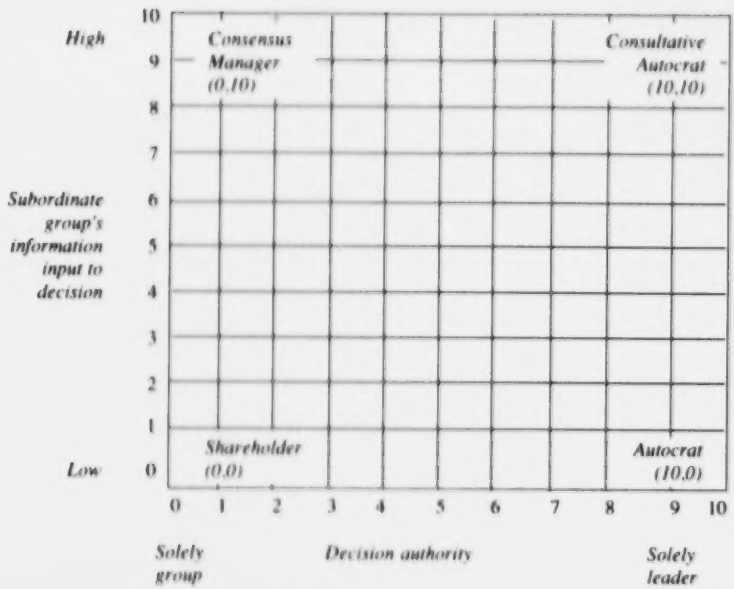
those who insist styles must change.

Styles Are Difficult to Change

Certainly Fiedler's contingency theory admits for very little style flexibility in leaders. As mentioned earlier, Fiedler sees leaders as either task-motivated or relationship-motivated but not both. Fiedler saw this basic style motivation as part of one's personality and, as such, very difficult to change, especially through a short training program.

> At best it takes one, two, or three years of intensive psychotherapy to effect lasting changes in personality structure. It is difficult to see how we can change in more than a few cases an equally important set of core values in a few hours of lectures and role-playing or even in...one or two weeks.

Figure 2. Bonoma-Slevin Leadership Model Grid



From *Executive Survival Manual, A Program for Managerial Effectiveness* by Thomas V. Bonoma and Dennis P. Slevin.
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Yet at the same time Fiedler maintains that neither style is appropriate for all situations. Are some leaders thus doomed to failure simply because they find themselves in a situation incompatible with their styles? The answer is no; Fiedler believed that those leaders in incompatible situations could change the situation.

Sergiovanni, too, resting his case heavily on Fiedler's findings, has maintained that style, like personality, is very difficult to change. Although he admits that "some leaders are able to change styles with ease," he believes that "trainers overestimate style flexibility and do not account sufficiently for those of us (perhaps the majority of us) with more limited style ranges."

Also holding to this view are the researchers who identified the "change facilitator styles" of school principals—initiators, managers, and responders. Hall and his colleagues say "the available research and training experiences lead us to believe that one's style is so closely tied to personality and history that it is not easily changed." Principals may be able to change their individual behaviors for a time, but their overall style continues.

Some Leaders Can Change Their Styles

"Successful leaders can adapt their leader behavior to meet the needs of the group," insist Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, who see four possible combinations of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior:

- task-oriented behavior
- relationship-oriented behavior
- task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior combined
- neither task-oriented nor relationship-oriented

Like Reddin, Hersey and Blanchard believe that any of the four styles could be effective. But Hersey and Blanchard do not believe that every leader used or even could use all four styles. "Some leaders are able to modify their behavior to fit any of the four basic styles, while others can utilize two or three styles." In other words some leaders have the ability to be flexible in style and others are more rigid; the most flexible are the most likely to be effective in jobs that require a lot of adaptability.

Reddin is another author who believes that some leaders can change style and other leaders have little flexibility. According to Reddin, the best leaders have three important abilities. The first is "situational sensitivity," which enables leaders to diagnose situations. The second is "style flexibility," which allows them to match their styles to the situation, and the third is "situational management skill," which helps them to change the situation to fit their styles.

Styles Must Change

Probably the theory of leadership style that allows for the greatest style flexibility was developed by Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi. In their model,

the leader must vary his or her style according to the followers' competence and confidence, which change not only from person to person but also with each task assigned to the same person. In assigning each task, the leader must choose among directing, coaching, delegating, and supporting styles.

Likewise, Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey held that leader behavior must vary to fit the "maturity" level of followers. As followers became more able to operate on their own, these researchers believed that leaders would be forced to change their styles. The successful leaders would change, whereas the unsuccessful could not.

Flexibility Is Not Always Desirable

Reddin saw another side to style flexibility. He saw the negative effects of a "high-flex" manager in a situation that calls for a lower degree of flexibility. This situation Reddin described as "style drift"; "drift managers" are those who are perceived as having no minds of their own, who fail to organize their situation, and who allow change to overwhelm them. Thus Reddin saw that the need for style flexibility, like the need for a particular style, varies to fit the situation.

School Leaders Must Be Flexible about Some Things

There are so many diverse components of a principal's job that the situation may change from minute to minute. If we analyze the situation in Fiedler's terms, we find that at times the "task structure" is clearly spelled out (such as in organizing a bus schedule), and at other times it is extremely vague (as when improving school climate). At times "position power" is high (such as when hiring a new teacher) and at times very low (as in implementing a request from the central office). Only "leader-member relations" may stay fairly stable, but these vary from school to school.

In the face of this complex situation and the conflicting theories reviewed here, one conclusion seems clear: school administrators are going to have to be flexible about something—either their styles or their situations—or they are not going to be able to cope with their jobs. It is up to each individual administrator to decide, based on the theories presented so far, which aspect can be most easily changed.

Synthesizing the Theories

The preceding sections have presented important aspects of some (but certainly not all) well-known leadership theories. At this point it may seem appropriate to ask how these theories fit together. Can they be coordinated to form a more all-encompassing theory?

It is quite tempting to think that we now have all the pieces of a giant puzzle that can be fitted together into a coherent whole. And at first glance it may appear that many of these theories are quite compatible. Certainly, all those that emphasize concern for task or human relations as elements of style have

something in common, as do those that emphasize decision-making.

But after we have made these rather elementary connections, we are blocked from taking the logical next step of making generalities about all the theories. For instance, at first it seems to make sense that leadership styles that stress human relations are quite similar to those that stress participative decision-making, but the analogy does not hold up. A leader with democratic or subordinate-centered style may (or even must) also have a concern for task according to some of these theories (notably Halpin's).

Other seeming similarities turn out to be superficial. Although both Fiedler and Reddin see task and human relations as important components of style, they are diametrically opposed about whether leaders can change their styles—and this difference has big implications for the practice of leadership.

Unfortunately, it is not yet time for an overarching theory of leadership. The data are not all in on important questions like whether leaders can change styles or what the most important components of style should be.

The kind of synthesis that is possible with leadership style theories is one that compares and contrasts the theories in a way that shows graphically how they are alike and how they differ. This we have attempted to do in the form of table 1 on pages 44 and 45. In addition to listing the theories according to the components of style they emphasize, the table also gives each theory's answer to the questions of whether the components are mutually exclusive, whether style ought to vary with the situation, what the components of the situation are, and whether style is flexible.

So What?

None of the theories of leadership style discussed so far has much value to leaders unless it can be used to improve leader performance. Whether styles can or should vary to fit the situation or how one determines the important characteristics of the situation are questions that do not really matter unless the answers can be used to select or train better leaders or to be a better leader.

Researchers and theoreticians do not always share this pragmatic view. Their work is not always aimed at practitioners, and even when it is, they are more often concerned about discovering "truths" than they are about being helpful. Thus, the theories discussed in this chapter do not always easily or neatly lend themselves to practice. Nevertheless, the following section is an attempt to pick out those practical implications that can be taken from the theories and studies discussed so far.

Becoming a Better Leader

How one uses leadership style theories depends on two things: what beliefs and assumptions about leadership one holds and what one's goals are.

Table 1. Comparison of Leadership Style Theories

Dimensions	*Authors*	*How Many Styles?*	*What Kinds of Style?*
DECISION-MAKING	Tannenbaum and Schmidt	2	*Decision-Making* "Subordinate-centered vs. boss-centered" (Democratic vs. autocratic) (former most effective)
	Bonoma and Slevin	4	*Decision-Making* Four possible styles: autocrat, consultative manager, consultative autocrat, shareholder (all but the last are effective)
PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES	McGregor	2	*Views of Employees* Theory X (need extrinsic motivators) vs. Theory Y (self-motivated) (Latter view most effective)
TASK AND HUMAN RELATIONS	Halpin	2	*Task and Human Relations* Concern for initiating structure or consideration
	Fiedler	2	*Task and Human Relations* Task-oriented vs. Human relationship oriented (either can be effective)
	Reddin	4	*Task and Human Relations* Four combinations of human relations orientation and task orientation. Four possible styles: integrated, separated, related, dedicated (each can be effective)
	Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey Hersey and Blanchard	4	*Task and Human Relations* (both can be effective)
	Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi	4	*Task and Human Relations* Four combinations of directive and supportive behaviors: directing, coaching, supporting, delegating (each can be effective)
	Sergiovanni and Elliott	4	*Task and Human Relations* (same as Reddin above) Integrated, separated, related, dedicated (each can be effective)
INNOVATION AND RISK TAKING	Hall and others, Hord and Hall	3	*Change Facilitator Styles* Initiator (most effective at implementing change), manager, responder
	Miskel		Several, including risk-taking propensity of leaders
	Holloway and Niazi		

Are Styles Mutually Exclusive?	*Do Styles Vary with Situations?*	*What are the Components of the Situation?*	*Is the Leader's Style Flexible?*
Yes (leader cannot use both at the same time)	Yes	Forces in the manager, forces in the subordinates, and forces in the situation	Yes (leader chooses the styleapprociate at the time)
No (all possible combinations of the styles are possible)	Yes	Where authority is placed and where information comes from	Yes
Yes	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
No (effective leaders have bothconcerns)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Yes	Yes	Most important component is leader situational control, made up of position power, leader-member relations, task structure	No
No	Yes	Organizational philosophy, technology, superior, coworkers, subordinates	Some leaders are flexible and some are not
Yes (although leader can change from one to the other, does not use both simulataneously)	Yes	Follower maturity	Yes (must change with time)
No	Yes	Follower developmental level—competence and commitment	Yes (leader varies style with each follower and each task)
No	Yes	Demands of the job, nature and distribution of power and authority, expectations held by significant others	Usually no, and not without great difficulty
No	No	Not applicable	No
Not applicable	Yes	Leader years of experience and innovative management techniques	Not applicable
Not applicable	Yes	Leader control	Not applicable

Below are listed some goals that leaders may have, each followed by a brief discussion of strategies for accomplishing the goal suggested by the pertinent theories. The leader will want to weigh each strategy according to his or her philosophy of leadership. The first and largest group of goals and strategies is based on the assumption that leaders can, indeed, change their leadership styles when it is necessary.

Goals That Assume Flexible Style

Raise Motivation of Workers, Help Them Accept Changes, and Improve Morale. If the leader holds these goals, then more "subordinate-centered" leadership, as defined by Tannenbaum and Schmidt, may be appropriate. Although Tannenbaum and Schmidt do not offer a recipe for how to become more subordinate-centered, they do offer guidelines for determining whether this style will be appropriate for particular subordinates. This leadership style may indeed be in order if the subordinates have the following characteristics:

- high needs for independence
- readiness to assume responsibility
- high tolerance for ambiguity
- interest in the problem at hand
- understanding of and identification with the goals of the organization
- necessary knowledge and experience
- a history of sharing in decision-making

Besides depending on subordinates, the decision to change to more subordinate-centered leadership must also consider other factors: the manager's feelings and values, and situational forces. Is subordinate-centered leadership valued by the manager? Does the manager have confidence in subordinates? Will more participative decision-making be accepted in the particular organization and are employees compatible enough to work together? All these questions must be answered before a switch to subordinate-centered leadership is clearly called for. An acceptance of McGregor's theories and a desire to increase employee motivation will probably also prompt a similar type of move toward more participative management.

Remove Stress, Reduce Workload, and Ensure the Survival of the Organization. If the leader is, however, in the position of some principals today who have for a long time been committed to participative management, who already ask employees to help with every decision—from which teacher to hire to which waste basket to buy—and who feel overwhelmed by the process, then a more assertive style of leadership may be appropriate. For participative managers who feel under great stress, overworked, and worried about the very survival of the organization, a return to more leader autonomy may be in order. This does not mean a return to Theory X, but rather a realization that leaders

must make some independent decisions.

Determine If the Leader's Style Fits a Particular Situation. Some leaders may feel that leadership style ought to vary to fit the work situation but may not know how to determine whether their style is appropriate for their own particular work situation. Their goal thus becomes one of assessing the compatibility of their style and situation. Like Tannenbaum and Schmidt, Reddin does not specify how to change style, but his theory is very helpful in determining if there is a fit between style and situation.

The leader can first determine which one of Reddin's categories (dedicated, related, separated, or integrated) describes his or her style. The next step is to look at important components of the situation as outlined by Reddin (superior, subordinates, technology, organizational philosophy, and coworkers) and determine whether the style used is appropriate to fit these.

For instance, if the manager knows more about the job than do the subordinates, if unscheduled events are likely to occur, if directions must be given, or if performance is easily measurable, then an effective dedicated style (benevolent autocrat) will contribute to the manager's success. But if the leader in this situation is not "dedicated," he or she may have to make some changes in either the style or the situation.

Adapt Style to Maturity of Followers. Some leaders are going to find that their experience, beliefs, and abilities cause them to lean toward the theories that hold that style should change with follower maturity. These leaders will closely assess their follower's capacity to set goals, willingness to take responsibility, education, and experience and choose their styles accordingly.

According to Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey, the appropriate style is task-oriented when maturity is low, relationship-oriented when it is moderate, and as little leadership as possible if maturity is high. Leaders will remember, too, the warning that follower maturity may regress (especially when new tasks are presented) and that style must change to fit. In Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi's framework, leaders combine varying degrees of direction and support according to whether the followers have competence and confidence to carry out the task.

Improve Decision-Making. Some leaders have trouble making leadership decisions or even deciding how these decisions ought to be made. These leaders may find it helpful to borrow Bonoma and Slevin's idea of looking at information input and decision-making authority and determining for each decision who ought to supply information relevant to the decision and who actually ought to make the decision. Based on this assessment, the leader may decide to increase or decrease staff involvement in decision-making.

Those interested may also find it helpful to use Bonoma and Slevin's leadership checklist to help them think through how well their styles fit the organization's needs. This checklist asks things like "Am I developing my subordinates by letting them participate in decisions affecting them?" and "Does the organization management system work for me or do I work for it?"

We must add to all these suggestions Sergiovanni's warning that situations are extremely complex and that any system that looks at only one or two components of the situation is much too limited. Leaders who focus only on one situational component may run into trouble with the others. Worth repeating, too, is Sergiovanni's warning that for many leaders, styles may not be easy to change. Those who expect it to change overnight are in for a frustrating time.

The preceding suggestions have all been based on the supposition that leaders have some control over and can change their styles. The next group of suggestions is based on the opposite assumption: leaders' styles usually cannot be changed.

Goals That Assume Inflexible Style

Change the Situation to Fit One's Style. If one accepts Fred Fiedler's assumptions about the necessity of changing the situation when style and situation are incompatible, his theories are extremely useful in improving one's leadership abilities. In the book written with Martin Chemers and Linda Mahar, Fiedler has supplied specific techniques for making needed changes.

After explaining how to categorize both style and situation and providing instruments for use in the process, these authors advise leaders on how to change the situation to fit their style. Fiedler, as we recall, believes that relationship-oriented leaders work best in situations of moderate control, and task-oriented leaders work best in situations of very great or very little control. According to the authors, the most important step a leader can take to increase control is to improve leader-member relations. This might be done through socializing more with members of the group or requesting particular people to work in the group. The second most effective way to increase control is to change the task structure. This might be done by structuring the task more tightly or asking superiors for more structured tasks or detailed instructions. Obtaining more training often serves to make the task more structured. The final method of increasing control would be to change one's status or "position power." This might involve developing more expertise in the job or using more fully one's decision-making power.

Fiedler, Chemers, and Mahar also explain how to decrease control of the situation through such tactics as socializing less with the workers, loosening task structure, and asking for more participative decision-making. They also note that those who accept Fiedler's theories about the difficulty of changing style and yet who nevertheless feel that their styles must change may want to embark on a program (probably lengthy) of therapy.

Increase Innovativeness. Leaders who want to become more innovative will have to increase their risk-taking behavior or make their organization's management techniques more innovative. How can risk-taking be strengthened? According to the findings of Holloway and Niazi, one way is to increase control of the situation by improving leader status or group support.

Improve Human Relations. If school leaders accept Sergiovanni and

Elliott's theory that a style stressing human relations is effective in most schools, then they will want to assess their styles (using the Sergiovanni and Elliott questionnaire) in attempting to determine whether their styles do indeed have this kind of emphasis. Most people believe they have human relation skills, but without an instrument they are unable objectively to assess how they compare to others on this dimension. Those who discover that they have the required related or integrated styles will be reassured. Those who are very weak in human relations will face a difficult decision. They may have to reassess whether a school leadership position is the best place for them to be.

Training Programs

Any theory of leadership style that makes it possible to become a better leader also has implications for leadership training programs. If a theory can be used to improve leadership behavior, it can also be the basis for a training program. Anyone who wants to institute a training program for leaders can begin by going back over this chapter, extracting the theories that would be helpful along with the new behavior these theories imply, and using those as a basis for training leaders. Aside from these obvious applications, a few more specific applications need to be made.

Hersey and Blanchard, who preferred to view leadership as "an observed behavior" not dependent on inborn abilities or potential, believe individuals can be trained to adapt their leadership styles to fit varying situations. They argue that "most people can increase their effectiveness in leadership roles through education, training, and development." Nevertheless, these authors do not believe that leadership training is easy and they warn that most training programs fail to consider the difficulty of changing styles quickly.

Fiedler likewise is critical of leadership training programs, but for other reasons. Fiedler notes that most training programs are never evaluated objectively, so that it is impossible to tell whether they were really effective or not. Most programs that have been evaluated "throw considerable doubt on the efficacy of these training programs for increasing organizational and group performance." Fiedler's theories offer an explanation of why this finding may be so. Assuming that most leadership training programs teach leaders to be more relationship-oriented or more task-oriented, Fiedler notes that even if it were effective, each kind of training would be useful only to some leaders and not to others, depending on their situations. A leader trained to be more task-oriented will become better suited for situations where the leader has much or little control but will become less suited for situations involving intermediate amounts of control. Those trained to be more relationship-oriented would be better suited for situations intermediate in control but poorly suited for high- and low-control situations.

Fiedler offers an alternative. "If leadership training is to be successful, the present theory would argue that it should focus on providing the individual with methods for diagnosing the favorableness of the leadership situation and for adapting the leadership situations to the individual's style of leadership."

The leadership training guide written by Fiedler, Chemers, and Mahar attempts to do exactly that. This guide, mentioned in the previous section, is designed as a self-instructional program to help leaders become more effective. Part 1 is concerned with identifying leadership style, part 2 provides tools for accurately diagnosing and classifying leadership situations, and part 3 discusses how to match the leadership style with the situation, and, if necessary, change the situation. The guide contains numerous exercises, each usually consisting of a short case study or incident presenting a problem in leadership and asking the participant to choose the best of several solutions. Average time for completion of the entire guide is five hours. In a 1979 article, Fiedler noted that objective evaluation techniques have proved this program to be extremely effective.

Another training program that shows evidence of being effective has been described by Leverne Barrett and Edgar Yoder. Unlike the programs criticized by Fiedler, this program was carefully evaluated with pre- and post-test data collection and (something unusual in most evaluation efforts) a control group.

The program was based on the theories of researchers like Halpin who make two assumptions not held by Fiedler: that effective leadership requires both task-oriented and human-relations-oriented behavior and that leadership style can be changed by a leadership training program.

Barrett and Yoder emphasize that an important component of the program was its first step: principals were given feedback about how their teachers saw them as leaders through the teachers' responses on the Supervisory Behavior Development Questionnaire, the Likert Profile, and the Job Objectives Questionnaire. Barrett and Yoder maintain that this information helped leaders realize the need to change and made them more responsive to training. The program sought to teach human relations skills through such workshop activities as communicating, instituting administrative structures that promote communication, and establishing a working climate in which teachers and students have feelings of self-worth. Task-oriented activities included showing the principals how to help teachers learn and achieve the goals of the school.

According to a posttraining survey of teachers, the administrators improved their leadership behavior in both task-oriented and human-relations-oriented areas, especially in adequacy of communication and work facilitation.

These successful examples should not obscure the fact that some training programs on leadership style have serious problems. Those who choose a program should remember the warnings of Sergiovanni, who objected not only to the simplistic nature of many programs (especially those that looked at only one situational variable) but to the very goals of the programs.

> The leadership models themselves are too simple, the claims of most leadership trainers are unrealistic and the assumptions basic to the models and to training programs are conceptually flawed on one hand and emphasize instrumental and mechanical aspects of leadership at the acute expense of the substansive on the other.

Administrators looking for a good program should be wary when promises of success are too sweeping, when instantaneous changes are promised, and when the true goals of leadership appear to be forgotten.

Leader Selection

Just as they have implications for leadership training programs, the leadership style theories discussed here all have implications for leader selection. Any theory that includes ideas about the most effective style can be adapted to choosing the most effective leader. Some of the theories and findings have specific application to leader selection in the schools. For example, Miskel's research with principals implies that propensity for risk taking may be one good indicator of the performance potential of principals. This finding seems especially noteworthy in light of the fact that quite often those who are considered the most promising candidates are conformists who follow all the rules and never task risks.

Conclusion

This brief survey of theories and research on leadership styles reveals the subject is not a simple one. The theories are complex and varied and encompass such things as personalities, attitudes, decision-making techniques, risk-taking, and orientation toward work and people. They include such areas as leaders' control of the situation, subordinates' maturity, and technology. Some rest firmly on the belief that leadership style can be changed, whereas others assume that it cannot. Some theorists maintain that an effective leader has a style that emphasizes a concern for both the "task" and "human relations," whereas others believe that these concerns are incompatible and not found within the same person. Some theorists stress an ideal leadership style, but others hold that the best style varies to fit the situation.

How can such diverse and conflicting theories be helpful to leaders? After the initial smoke and confusion have cleared and administrators are actually able to make sense of and differentiate among these theories, their usefulness begins to become apparent.

Because leadership by definition includes action, any theory of leadership is helpful only if it can be used to guide action. Each of these theories has implications for better leadership. Each can be used as a basis for training leaders, for selecting leaders, and most importantly for becoming a better leader.

Although the theories disagree significantly, basing one's actions on any one of them is more effective than following no theory at all. This is because action based on a coherent theory is more consistent than action that is purely blind. It tends to be more economical of effort and less wasteful of physical and psychic energy because it is based on a clearer logic and vision than is blind action.

So then the question becomes how to use these leadership style theories

as a basis for one's leadership behavior. Although there is no magic recipe, some criteria and ways of evaluating the theories are better than others. The first step is to understand the major leadership style theories. The second step is to weigh the evidence, look at research findings, and examine the logic and internal consistency of each theory.

And what is the final step? It might seem that the final step is simply to choose a theory to follow. But of course it is not that easy. Leaders do not choose the theories they follow like dishes from a smorgasbord. Rather, choosing a theory is like buying a new pair of shoes—it has to fit the person who is going to use it.

So rather than intellectually determining the "best" theory, the final step is to look closely at yourself and your situation. Do you believe you can change your style or does that sound extremely difficult or impossible? Are you already aware that your style changes from situation to situation? What are the most important components of your situation? What is the most important aspect of your style, and what do you believe it ought to be? In short, which theory makes the most sense to you and fits best with your needs?

It may be that, in the face of so much conflicting evidence, the only way out of the leadership maze is to rely on intuition. In the end, it is simply the informed intuition of the leader that is the intended outcome of this analysis of leadership concepts and theories.